

A SERIOUS
EXAMINATION
O F
A Pretended Answer to a Paper of Judgment past at Yorke,
With a REPLY thereto.

Wherein several of the Mistakes and Errors
in the said Answer, are Manifested and
Detected.

And the Proceedings of Friends against J. C. E.N.
T. D. and J. W. and their Abettors, are Vindi-
cated and Cleared.

By a Lover of Peace and Christian Liberty,
George Myers.

Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away Disciples after them, Acts 20. 30.

Now I beseech you Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offenses, contrary to the Doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them, Rom. 16. 17.

These be they who Separate themselves, Jude 19.

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An Introductory Epistle.

To my welbeloved Friends called Quakers, who are lovers of Peace and Unity in our Lord Jesus Christ, Greeting.

Forasmuch, as it hath pleased the Almighty God, in his infinite Love and Kindness, revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord, to make known unto us (through him) the way of Life and Salvation; and by his powerful Arm, to gather us out of the Defilements and Pollutions of this present World; to be a peculiar people unto him, in this our Day, Age and Generation; it greatly behoves us all, who make profession of his blessed Truth, to eye the Lord, and have a due regard to his Light and Grace, and the Counsell of his Spirit in all our undertakings; for that it is manifest, that the wicked and ungodly Spirit, that rules in the Children of disobedience, doth not only labour to reproach us amongst the people of the World, but also is at work, among some of those who have been reckon'd of us; whose watch (it seems) has not been so duly kept, as that they have been capable of discerning his subtle Transformations; but have suffered the hour of Temptation, and power of Darkness so far to prevail over them, as that they will now joyn with Sions Adversaries; and under the specious pretence of Christian freedom and Liberty, and of being left to the Spirit within, would not on'y despise the care, exercise and concern of our Friends and Brethren in the Church of Christ, for preserving all things in that holy, clean, pure, decent and sanctified state which becomes the Honourable of Faith, and which tends to Truth's praise; and the repute thereof among the Sons of men; but also let loose the Enemy at his will and pleasure, under this pretence of spiritual Liberty, to lead such as profess the Truth, into indecent, uncomely and disorderly practices, without any limit, curb, or reproof, and so thereby overthrow, or in a great measure lay aside the government and discipline of the Lords Power and Spirit in and amongst his people.

I Question not but many of you have heard of that disorderly work, which several Persons of the City of York have made; who have separted themselves from the publick Meetings of Friends, held for many years in that City, in the Meeting house; insomuch that Friends at the Quarterly Meeting (after diverse Exhortations and Admonitions given unto the said people) found it a duty incombent upon them, on the behalf of God, his Truth and People, to declare and testifye against John Cox, Edward Nightingale, Thomas Dennison, and John Winward, They being the persons principally concern'd in the said work of strife and separation, and against that spirit that led them thereto, and also against those who should

abst: them therein: and sometime after the said Paper of Judgement, or Testimony by Friends given against them; a Copy thereof was extant in Print with the names of those that subscrib'd it, and a pretended answer annexed thereto. Who the Author of that answer was they have not told us, neither was he so Ingenious as to subscribe his name to what he writ, although he could take the liberty (or others for him) to publish to the world above seventy names in print, such dealing as that doth plainly bespeak them what they are, and what their design is; so that the Author (who ever he be) does not only deserve a sharpe reproof for that thing, but even all those who have endeavoured to justify him therein.

As for my part I have been much exercized in heart and spirit, concerning this matter of Separation and Strife among them, in a true desire that this Breach might have been made up, and the Differences composed quietly, both with respect to the Truths reputation, and the Persons concern'd; and for that end have sometimes used endeavours in discourse, Private and Friendly with some of them, in order to a reconcilement, but could not obtain it upon right terms.

I am sorry that I should have any occasion to writ upon this account, but it seems it must be so, unless I could be content, that not only my self, but also several other faithful Friends and Brethren should lie under an unjust Censure, and be exposed to the World as guilty of Irregular proceedings against the persons here named, and of condemning that which did no way appear to be evil.

What as is here written, is not any affectation to be Popular, nor yet to fall into Controversie, but really for Conscience sake; as a vindication of the proceedings of Friends, and to manifest and detect some of the Mistakes and Errors in the said Answer; lest those who are weak, and unacquainted with the work and design of that Spirit, should be deceived with their empty, vain and specious Pretences, and so be brought back again under the yoke of Bondage.

In the discharging of this my duty, I have endeavoured as much as I well could (in clearness) to avoid sharpness, for in hopes that this small Treatise may not be without its service, I would not block up the way thereof with using such terms, as might in the least beget any suspicion of hardness upon them; Christian Patience, Love, Meekness, Gentleness, Forbearance and Charity, have still had a place with me in the exercise of my Spirit Testimony upon this account.

So leaving the Issue to the Lord, whose divine presence and blessed counsel, I have felt to be with me in this undertaking; I remain your Christian Friend.

G. M.

A Serious Examination of a pretended Answer to a Paper of Judgment past at York:

With a Reply thereto.

THAT which the Author of the said answer first undertakes to touch upon is the proceedings of Friends against *J. C. E. N. T. D.* and *J. W.* whether they be according unto Gospel order or not, for after he has recited some passages in the said paper of Judgement, He says, *Those are the grounds that are layd down to prove the proceedings Gospel order.*

Reply, I conceive the Author of the said answer is either ignorant of the great care, and many endeavours which Friends have had, and used towards those People, in admonishing, cautioning and advising them, for a Reconciliation, or else he is mindful to make himself work, and to cavil at any he meets, if he had not been under th'one of these circumstances, he might have spared himself the pains of meddling upon this point.

He says, *There are diverse things might be alledged against the proceedings of Friends, but at that time shall only observe three; The first is, that the Judgement was past at the same Meeting it was first brought before them, and that it therefore appeareth haste.*

Reply, What those diverse things are he tells us not, therefore shall not take any further notice of them, being perswaded if that he had any thing material or to his purpose, he would not have omitted it. As for the Judgement being past at the same Meeting, it is well known that they had kept up their separate Meeting several months before that Testimony was given out against them, and that they were frequently dealt with, and admonisht during that time, to break up their separate Meeting, which they would not do.

Again, they were dealt with by order of the month Meeting, and a paper of caution and advise was sent them from thence, shewing a dislike of the work of separation they were gone into, and the disorderly attempts used among them relating to the same. An answer whereunto they pretended to give, wherein they were so far from demonstrating

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monstrating any real sorrow and contrition, for what they had done, that they seem'd to justify themselves, and to reflect against Friends.

And after their Case was (by the agreement of the Monthly Meeting) presented to the Quarterly Meeting (as a demonstration of the Regularity of proceedings in that case; as also of that Christian care and forbearance had towards these People for their Restoration) there was care to be taken for some persons to go to speak to them, and give them an account, what information was given against them, so that thereby they had an opportunity offer'd to appear at the said Meeting, to make their defence, which they did not.

They were also admonish't to break up their separate Meeting, and call in those Papers they had written and given out against Friends, and the order of Truth, and condemn their out-goings and errors in those respects (with some other things discoursed on to this purpose) all which they did not only refuse to do, but some of them endeavoured by their discourse to Justifie themselves in what they had done, and to charge the Quarterly Meeting with Apostacy, Innovation, and several other things.

And after the Persons thus concern'd gave a report to the Meeting what answers they had obtain'd; there was again care taken for some Persons to speak to them a second time from the Meeting, and to caution and admonish them as before, which was accordingly done; but still they continued vindicating their said work of Strife and Separation, and did not in the least demonstrate any manner of Sorrow, Trouble, Remorse or Penitency for what they had done; so that after much Tenderness, Christian care, Forbearance, and Friendly endeavours had and used towards them, and after they were several times Caution and Admonish't, as is before set forth; Friends at the aforesaid Meeting, did with much deliberation proceed in Truth's Authority to Testifie against them, the Spirit they were act'd by, and the Works thereof among them.

By all which the Reader may observe that there was not in these proceedings the least appearance of haste (as the Author would seem to alledge) nor yet of any other Irregularity; therefore his expectations upon those accounts were very causeless and unnecessary.

His second observation is, That many of the Meeting dissented from passing that Judgement, at least at that time; by which (he says) it seems to be Arbitrary and Wilful.

Reply, Although 'tis possible there might be some Persons there that

that did not subscribe. yet it does not therefore follow, but that they might be one in Judgement with the rest (as some since that time have given an account themselves) and if there were any such as did really dissent, yet such might be the nature of their dissenting, as could no way invalidate the Testimony of Friends abiding in the Truth; nor yet any way render the Judgement there given to be Arbitrary or Wilful for 'tis probable there might be then and there present some Person; who had associated themselves with those People proceeded against, and that did abett and encourage them in that work which was for Condemnation, so that the Testimony given forth, and the Judgment passed, did extend to them, as well as those principally concern'd; and tho they did dissent from joyning in Testimony against themselves in those cases, yet for all that, Friends might in the wisdom of God, proceed in giving forth their Testimony for the Truth, as aforesaid.

He says, Its where the Church agrees, and not where it doth not agree, that her Acts can be supposed according to Gospel order.

Reply, What he means by Church here is to be considered; if he means that no Act shall pass in an Assembly, which shall any way be supposed good, and consistant with Gospel order, unless every particular person there present do declare their condescension and agreement thereunto, I cannot own his Judgment therein, for then it will follow, that if one or more turbulent, ill-disposed and contentious Persons do intrude themselves designedly to make Objections, and raise up Scruples, and Jangles, there shall scarce any thing be brought to a period: Nay further, I conceive that if any person be there who pretends to represent a Monthly Meeting, and he fall to be singular in his Judgment, and in a Spirit of Variance and Discord, be known to abett that which is to be Testified against, and openly refuse to condescend unto such things, as the rest there met shall in the wisdom of God see Necessary and Convenient; such Person so going out of the unity and fellowship of that Life and Spirit, in and by which the rest of the Members are actcd, in their Exercise and Service for God and his Truth, doth actually split and disunite himself from the Church or Body, and makes himself no true Member thereof by his own act; so that after he be dealt with in a Christian manner, by way of caution, admonition and advise, and yet still continue in his work of opposition and dissension; such person under those Circumstances and Qualifications, ought not to be any hinderance unto the proceedings

of the rest who abide in that which is good ; nor yet is the act of the rest (so rightly Qualified) any way Invalid, or out of the Gospel order by reason of such person dissenting, or not agreeing thereto, when as nothing is offered nor done, but what as (upon due Consideration) is consonant and agreeable to Truth, and the Testimony thereof in and amongst the People of God.

Thus then altho there might possibly be some persons present at that Meeting, under these, or some of these Circumstances, or Qualifications abovementioned, & that might pretend to Christian Freedom, or Spiritual Liberty, to be Members of the Church, or chosen or sent by a Monthly Meeting ; yet if they do thus actually dis-unite themselves from the Body, by departing from the Spirit, Power and Life, in and by which the true Church is Gathered, Acted and Preserved, and by joyning unto that which is Evil and Corrupt ; all their pretences to Christian Liberty, or of being chosen or sent from a Monthly Meeting, and not condescending to this, or that, cannot restore them into the Unity of the true Spirit, rescue them from the Judgment of Truth, nor make void or disannul that which in the Wisdom and Counsel of God is concluded and agreed upon in the Church of Christ ; so that the dissenting of such people (under these Qualifications) makes no disagreement in the Church of Christ. But she remains entire in that universal Spirit, wherein she is still rendered capable of acting for God, the exaltation of his Truth, and the comfort of his People.

Thirdly, he says, *That they principally concern'd on the other side, who by their opposition kept on foot this Difference, till it came to this height of Dis-unity, are first and eminent in bringing about this Judgment, and that they are therefore in the nature of Witnesses for themselves, and Judges in their own Causes.*

Reply, Who they are that are so principally concern'd he tells us not, tho he charges them with opposition, and keeping on foot this Difference ; neither does he give any account what it is they have opposed therefore in this respect he speaks or writes at random. It certainly behoves us all to oppose that Spirit that leads into Discord, Disorder and Confusion ; if this be that which they have opposed (as nothing to the contrary is yet manifest) then it was not those (I suppose) he means of that kept the Difference on foot, but rather those are guilty of that Crime, whom the said Author is contending for ; where persons are Criminal, it is not those who testify against such

such Faults, that are the opposers (in this fence) or that keep the difference on foot ; but rather those who are faulty, and go about to Vindicate and Justifie themselves in such things. But that which the Author would make out is this, because he supposes there were some persons principally concern'd, and eminent in bringing about this Judgment; therefore they are rather to be accounted Parties, then to be allow'd either as Witnesses for themselves, or Judges in their own Causes : unto this I say, that the Author is mistaken again in this case, for if there had been any such, and that it had been their own cause, in respect of some difference about *meum* and *tuum*, then I confess his observation had been more feazable; But in this case it is not so, for it being Gods cause that Friends were concerned about, in Testifying against a dissenting and dividing Spirit, and the work and attemps thereof unto Strife and Contention in the Church of God, as appears by the said Testimony, as also by the product of that Spirit so Testified against ; in this case it is the Lord alone, by the Testimony and Authority of his own Spirit and Power in and amongst his people, being gathered together in his Name and Fear, that doth bear witness and give Judgment against that which is evil. Therefore those persons concern'd in giving out that Testimony, or Paper of Judgment on the behalf of God and his Truth, cannot in any tolerable supposition be esteem'd (in this case) either in the nature of Witnesses for themselves, or Judges in their own Causes.

Again, the Author says, *They are charg'd with being of a Dissenting and Dividing Spirit promoting Strife and Trouble, without particularizing what they Dissent from, or those Faults from whence Strife ariseth.*

Reply, If the Author know not what is meant by these expressions I shall tell him, that inasmuch as they are charg'd to be of a Dissenting, & Dividing Spirit, it is to be understood that they are dissented and gone out of the Fellowship and Union of that eternal Spirit and Power, by which the true Church is gather'd, into a holy Society to the Praise and Glory of God, and mutual Comfort one of another ; and so being gone from this holy Foundation, and being leaven'd with a Spirit of Dissention and Division, do thereby promote Strife and Trouble.

Now the Author says, *That every Striving is not evil* : which I grant for that we are exhorted to strive to enter in at the strait Gate, *Luke 13. 24.* which sort of Strife I could desire the said Author, and those persons he is pleading for, might be found in. But alas ! this is not

that (I fear) which they are striving for, they are rather wrestling to have the Gate wider than Truth will allow them, and when they come to be pinch'd in their passage, they make a retreat, or start aside, and cry out of Limitations, Orders and Restrictions.

Now since publick oppositions do seldom want specious pretences, and as in this case their pretence was Spiritual Liberty; according to the exhortation of the Apostle John, Chap. 4. 1. *Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they be of God.* It behooved the Church of Christ (abiding in that which can discern Spirits) to try this Spirit, that cryed out for all this Liberty, whether it were of God or no, and it being found upon tryal that these people were (in some degree) departed from the Crofts of Christ, and dissented from the Spirit of God; and its product in and amongst his people; therefore we cannot reasonable conclude any otherwise, but that the Strife and Trouble promoted by them, is certainly Evil, and consequently Condemnable.

The next thing is Separation, He alledges, *That they are Charg'd with a separate Meeting in their private Houses, and yet (he says) there doth not appear any evil, this simply consider'd, for having Meetings in private Houses, cannot be evil, except those that so meet elsewhere be evil, and if the Meeting be not evil, the separation from the publick House cannot be evil; thus (says he) according to the Letter of this great Charge, there appears no evil fixed.*

Reply, He mistakes the case again; for the Charge is not simply their meeting at private Houses, but that they so meet in a dissenting and dividing Spirit, in the disunion, out of the unity of that Life, Spirit and Power which only makes our meetings Good and Serviceable; for if the settling and establishing of publick Meetings in the unity of the Spirit of Truth, hath been approved and allowed of in the Church of Christ to be good; then for such as have been reputed Members of such meetings, to separate themselves from the rest in a dissenting and dividing Spirit, and meet in other places out of the unity of the Spirit of Truth, and without the approbation of the Chnrch of Christ, is certainly evil; but the first is true, and the persons proceeded against, being as appears guilty of the latter, have committed evil in that respect; therefore according to the Letter of the Charge, there is an evil fixed, and (notwithstanding, what as the said Author says to the contrary) to Judg and Condemn that evil, in the name of God, doth, and will certainly answer Truths Testimony.

He says, *That Friends have neither consider'd the effects as they lay embodied in their Causes, that so the evil pretended might have been prevented nor yet the cause when the effect is manifest, alledging, that placing Judgment upon the effect, without due consideration to the Cause, is more like to foment and animate Division, than restore the path of Peace and Truth to dwell in.*

Reply, As for the effects they were not only consider'd, as they lay embodied in their causes, but also the cause was (and is still) seen as the effect is manifest; the cause originally was, their departure and going from under the government and guidance of the Spirit of Truth in themselves, and the fellowship thereof among the Brethren, and joyning with a Stiff, Restless, Dissenting, and Disquiet Spirit, which was the cause of this Separation; and as the effect was fear'd, as it lay embodied in the cause, so it is in part manifest in this work of Strife and Separation transacted among them; nor was the Judgment only plac'd upon the effect, but the said cause was also consider'd, as in the said Paper of Judgement doth appear; and the Friends could not take away that cause, inasmuch as it arose and lay on their part (on the other hand) in going from that which was good, and the guidance and government thereof in themselves, and in joyning with that which is wrong; yet as the cause was discovered, and the effect also, they were in a friendly way caution'd and admonish'd unto a cessation of the effect, which could not otherwise be, but by taking away the cause; but since they have not as yet (in the Authors own termes) act'd the part of prudent Statists, nor of wise Physitians, in taking away the cause; I conceive it not amiss, by these lines, to advise them thereto, that so the effect may cease, and that they may no longer foment nor animate Divisions, but be restored into the path of Peace and Truth, there to dwell and abide with the rest of the Lords People.

He says, *They do alledge several occasions of offence, only shall consider, or stand upon that about Marriages, it being, or at least appearing the principal of all, by bringing these present Differences upon the publick Stage, for if (says he) your Judgment be wrong there, it is wrong in all.*

Reply, When as people are departed from under the government of the Truth in themselves, what is it that they will not be offended at, that any way Pinches or Curbs that Spirit that would be abroad, running into things that are Indecent and Disorderly? what do they find in that Testimony, given out by Friends, about second or latter

Marriages

Marriges, that allows any liberty to that which is Evil, or limits that which is Good ? it was the care and concern of Friends, for avoiding the Scandal or Reproach that might be cast upon the Truth, through the hasty and froward proceedings of Widdowers and Widdows in the case of Marrying again suddenly after the death of their former Wife or Husband, to give their Sence and Judgment in that matter ; and this is that it seems which some of them pretend to be offended at, and altho the said Author be pleas'd to assign this as appearing to be the principal of all, by bringing these present Differences upon the publick Stage ; yet there are several other things which they alledge, and pretend as causes or reasons of their Separation, which things they have set forth in writing, under six several heads, wherein is contain'd several smiting Queries, Reproaches and implicit Charges upon the Church of Christ, and the Care, Excercise, Concern and Practice of the Members thereof in the fear and wisdom of God upon several accounts ; which said Allegations of theirs have been (and still may be) answer'd, and the care, excercise and practices of Friends cleared and vindicated, as being consistant with Truth and Righteousness, and agreeable to the Rule, Order and Discipline of the Gospel.

But since they make such a great Clamour against the sence of Friends in this matter of Marriage, as though it was extraordinary Noisome, and Offensive to Christian Liberty ; for the sake of those who are tender in Heart and Spirit, and delight to dwell under the the excercise of Gods grace, and to be subject to the guidance thereof in themselves, and yet do not fully understand what this order nor the tendency of it is, which they thus speak of, and alledge against, I hold it not amiss to transcribe it over, and insert it here, and leave it to the consideration of serious, weighty and well composed Minds and Spirits.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

Forasmuch as York Month Meeting, have this day laid before us the case of such as having been Married, do in a very short time after Burial of their Wife or Husband go about to Marry again, which thing they cannot own, nor have unity with, but for their further confirmation have signified their desire, that Friends at this Meeting, would also give their Sence and Judgment with them concerning the same.

Whereupon, we having weighed the matter, in the sence of Gods holy fear do hereby

hereby declare and signifie to all, that are or may be concern'd therein, that it is our Sense and Judgment, that such as having buried Husband or Wife, and go about in a hasty mind to marry again in twelve months or under, after the burial of such former Wife or Husband, as aforesaid; they go out of the divine order of Gods holy, precious and unspotted Truth, into that which is of an ill favour, and bad report, and tends not only to the dishonour of themselves, but to the grief of Gods People, and gives occasion of stumbling to the weak, and opens the mouths of such as watch for evil, to speak evil against us.

Wherefore we do hereby exhort all Friends that profess the precious Truth, and themselves to be Members of the Body and Church of Christ Jesus, to watch unto that holy Spirit, that preserves out of all such things, that their Moderation, Chastity of mind, and Self-denial may be known unto all men, and that it may be manifest that we are of them that beat down the Body, and keep it in subjection, by a daily walking in that which mortifies the Flesh with the Afflictions and Losses thereof, so that none of us that profess the precious Truth, may be lead away into such hasty, dishonourable and unseemly Marriages, which are not only disown'd and denied by Friends, but also disown'd and condemn'd by other sober-moderate People, both in our Age, and in Ages and Generations past.

And we do also exhort all faithful Friends in their several and respective Monthly Meetings, to watch over the weak, that if any be tempted with such things, they may labour to help them out of that snare, and to encourage one another in the Spirit of Love and Peace, to follow after those things that are holy, and of good report, tending to Gods glory, the propagation of his unspotted Truth, and the edification and comfort of his People; in which his blessing hath been, and is still with us, and we hope will remain, and abide with you and us for ever.

From the Quarterly Meeting at York, }
the 23d. of the 10th. Month 1680. }

THUS, Reader, thou mayst see what it is these People pretend to be offended at, crying out of an Order, Limitation and Restriction; I would have them yet again to consider what it is that they apprehend to be hereby limited or restrain'd; if there be anything limited, it is the hasty mind, according to the tenor of the words as they lie, for that there is not only the time of twelve months mentioned, but also the qualification of the mind, which seems to take away all scruples in the case, unless they will argue that it is lawful for

persons professing the Truth and Faith of Christ, to marry in haste; which I presume not, for what is done in the haste, is done out of faith; because he that believes makes not haste, and if it be done out of the faith it is wrong, for what is not of faith is sin, and what is sinful is certainly evil, and so ought to be declared and testified against.

As for the time of twelve months it might seem to be little enough for forbearance in those cases, considering the reasons that may be alledged for it.

1st, That entire love, unity, nearness, and respect which ought to be betwixt Man and Wife whilst they live together in this World, methinks should have that impression and weight upon the Spirit and Mind of the Survivor, when death separates them; that it might (in a manner) claim some reasonable forbearance, and considerable time, before the love and respect to the deceased, and the memory thereof shall be so far extinguisht, as to suffer the affections to go out to marry another.

2dly, Common Reason and Nature it self, might seem to oblige a Woman to forbear Nine Months at least after the decease of her Husband, because it may so happen, and is probable that within that time after his decease, she may have Issue belonging to him; and if she should marry again very shortly after the decease of her former Husband, such a marriage might be of an ill consequence several ways: One instance thereof is, that the Issue of the former Husband, might be not only depriv'd of the Inheritance of its own Father, on th'one hand; but also on the other hand excluded as illegitimate.

3dly, The ancient Inhabitants of this Nation have formerly had such a dislike unto the actions of such as proceeded hastily to marry again, after the decease of their former Wifes or Husbands; that they have declared, and left it upon record, that those who married a Wife within a Year after the death of their former Wifes, and those who suffer'd themselves to be married within a Year after the death of their first Husbands, should be esteemed Infamous Persons, and punished with corporal punishments accordingly, *Andrew Horn, M'r. Just. Chap. 4. Sect. 13.*

4thly, It is well known and observ'd that the common sort of People now in our age, that are indifferent sober and discreet, tho they be not conyinced of that Truth, which we make profession of, yet they are ready to disown and condemn the actions of such as proceed very hastily upon these accounts, in marrying again suddenly after

the decease of former Wife or Husband, and do frequently reprehend such persons as very forgetful and unmindful of the lately deceased Wife or Husband, and to be very unbridl'd in their affections, in running out suddenly to marry again, esteeming such forward work rather as a Vice, then a Vertue.

5thly, Since it is manifest that not only the very nature and state of marriage, and that love, nearness and respect, which ought to be betwixt Husband and Wife whilst they live together in this World; but also common Reason, and Nature it self, the law of the Nation, and the general vogue and result of the common sort of People, do in a great measure claim (even in modestly) a considerable time of forbearance for Widowers and Widows, after the decease of their former Husbands and Wives, before they marry again; certainly those who pretend to a higher dispensation of Light and Truth than many others, ought to publish and demonstrate the same unto the World, in more holy, pious and self-denying examples of Temperance, Chastity and Vertue, and not to expose themselves to the Mockery, Scorn and Censure of the World, by pleading for, and running into such indecent, disorderly and uncomly practices as are not only disown'd and denied by Friends, but even by the common sort of People.

6thly, As Morality it self doth forbid such practices as are of an ill consequence, indecent, disorderly, and of evil report, much more doth Christianity; for tho Morality has a share in Christianity, yet Christianity doth mightily out-strip it; the very foundation of Christianity stands in a divine principle of Faith and Self-denial, the Doctrine of Mortification, Sanctification, Self-denial, Temperance, and Chastity, with other Christian Vertues clearly held forth in the evidence of the Spirit, and in a godly Conversation, is that which will certainly add to its fame and repute in the World, and cause it to gain ground in the hearts of the Sons and Daughters of men.

Lastly, Since, for the reasons aforesent oned, it behoves and is becoming Widowers to forbear a considerable time before they marry again, especially those who make profession of the pure and chaste truth of our God, I see no cause that any have to be offended at Friends for declaring that twelve months time is little enough for forbearance in those cases, much less seeing the qualification of the mind is effected, as well as the time of twelve months; nay further in Meckness, Moderation and Christian Charity (and I hope without offence) I may

tenderly propose it, by way of query unto all sober, serious and impartial minds and spirits, whether, for the reasons aforesaid, it may not stand with Christian prudence, for Widows and Widowers to forbear the time aforesaid, before they marry again; and if any who profess the Truth, do go about to marry sooner, whether it may be of an ill consequence, an occasion of scandal and reproach upon the Truth, and in some respects a demonstration of a hasty mind or not.

I know some may object and say, that people may proceed in a hasty mind after twelve months as well as before, which I grant, but however, if there be a forbearance so long, we may presume that the Scandal and Reproach among men of a sudden marrying, again, as also the ill consequences thereof are prevented, for which cause and end the said Testimony was (in a great measure) given forth, and yet still it rests with Friends at their monthly Meeting to judge with the Spirit of God of that haste after the twelve months, as the same appears before them?

And further, it is probable some may pretend divine motion to marry again within the aforesaid time, unto such I have this to say, that as it behoves them to be very careful what they pretend to in such cases, so I would advise them to consider how any Testimony shall arise for God and his Truth in such sudden proceedings, for if any shall pretend motion unto that, the doing whereof may probably be a scandal to the Truth, and reproach upon the professors thereof; and on the other hand, no Testimony for God and his Truth, being seen (or likely) to appear therein, or arise from the same, whether such motions and pretences do look very suspicious or not? I only propound this also to be considered, and if any be so tender in this respect that they would not be toucht upon this point, I leave them to the Lord, desiring that all may be loving, tender and respective unto such as appear in meekness to be under a conscientious excercise in these respects, and that such be stood near unto in counsel, advise and admonition, that so the strong may take the weak by the hand, and help them on the way as much as can be, for as it is not my intent, nor the intent of Gods people to bind or limit the motion of Truth in any, nor to impose upon any beyond their Christian freedom, so I would have all to be careful, not forwardly to oppose, contradict or disnrb Friends in their Christian excercise and care in endeavouring to prevent such proceedings as appear to be hasty, indecent, disorderly and

of an ill report, and if so be that any (notwithstanding the care and advise of Friends) will go on, and under a pretence of the Spirits motion do such things as the Lord by his Spirit in and amongst his people will not own, nor stand by, such must be content to allow the Testimony and Judgment of Truth, in and amongst Gods people, to proceed and pass against that which is evil, and of ill report. But since we are come to treat of divine motion, in this case, I have yet something further to offer upon this account, before I pass it.

Suppose that Friends being met together in the Name and Fear of God, would have a necessity laid upon them from the Lord, to declare and hold forth several matters and things, necessary and convenient to be observ'd and done by such as profess the Truth of our God, and are reputed Members of the same body, and amongst the rest, this case of Marriage (so scrupl'd at) might be propounded, and others not seeing it their duty and place to observe what was to holden forth, do forthwith fall on to opposition, with loud clamours against such things; I ask, who are the Imposers in this case? I conceive them to be the Imposers that oppose, and would restrain them, on whom the Lord has laid such a necessity, from their Christian Liberty, in declaring what they have received from the Lord, and exhorting to the observation thereof.

And as for those who see it not their duty to observe those things, tho I am quite against an implicit Faith, and blind Obedience, yet such should be careful not forwardly to oppose that which others in the fear of God, find a necessity from the Lord to hold forth unto them, and exhort them to the practice of, unless such Opposers will conclude that the Lord has already declared unto them his whole Councel and Will.

It is more safe for such persons which do not see or apprehend such things, seriously to consider whether the same of their not seeing be in themselves or no; if it be their own fault, in not walking in the Light (wherein they may see) nor attending to the voice and councel of the Spirit of Truth in themselves, then the want of sight upon this account shall not excuse them; for if it would, how safe were they that are spiritually blind, and hardens their hearts against whatsoever they have not a mind to submit to, for tho a sightless Submission, and blind Obedience, is no way acceptable to God, yet no mans blindness (where it is his own fault) shall excuse him for disobeying God; where any refuse to submit to the Judgment of Truth amongst Gods people,

People, and do contradict and oppose the same in a contentious and dissenting Spirit, the disobedience of such is not unto men, but unto God ; the Apostle Paul exhorted the *Philippians*, Chap. 2. 3. *That nothing should be done through strife, or vain glory, but with lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better then themselves.* Again, Phil. 3. 15. *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded ; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded God shall reveal even this unto you.* This was the method which the Apostle propounded, if any were otherwise minded, not to strive oppose and make Rents and Schisms ; but to wait quietly upon the Lord until he was pleas'd to manifest and reveal such things; and indeed, if such would but be content to wait upon God in that lowly frame of mind which receives, and answers the mind of the Spirit of God in themselves, they would receive an understanding with the rest of their Brethren, & have unity with the mind of the same Spirit in another, forasmuch as the same power and virtue that ariseth from the measure of the Spirit of Truth in ones self, and that convinceth a man in his own heart, doth attend the discovery of the mind of the same Spirit when delivered by others.

I know 'tis the Plea of many that would be loose and abroad in their minds, and not willing to submit unto the Spirit of Christ, nor yet condescend unto such things as the Lord by his Spirit through his people may advise to; to plead for Spiritual Liberty, that they ought not to be enjoynd to any thing beyond their freedom, for that they are in this Gospel day to be left to the Spirit, and the directions thereof, in themselves, and so would oppose the Spirit to the Spirit, and plead for dis unity under the name of liberty, endeavouring thereby not only to procure unto themselves a liberty (under this pretence) to do even what they please, , but also to escape the Judgment of Truth in others.

'Tis true it is a very just Plea for good men, in a good Cause to insist upon Christian Liberty, and to be left to the Spirits motion, for that none can be better left, then to the Spirit of God and the counsel thereof in themselves, provided they keep but to it, and be so settled in the Truth that they can do nothing against the Truth but for it, as the Apothic said, then they may well be left to their Freedom, because their Freedom stands in that which is good; but then, if under this pretence people run into things that are scandalous, undecent, disorderly, and of an ill report; where are they and their Freedom then ? it is not necessary that the Lord by his Spirit and Power in and amongst

his people, shall place some Restriction here, or put some Bound unto such Extravagancies, that so nothing may be done (or at least not consented to) in and among those that profess the Name and Truth of our God? but what as may really tend to the honour thereof in being decent, orderly, and of good report, and if any shall act contrary to what the Lord by his Spirit allows of among his people, the Testimony of Truth shall witness against them, that they are gone from the declared fense of Friends, and from the directions and fellowship of that which they pretend to.

It deserves our observation upon these accounts, to consider how plainly the Scriptures hold out, that tho the Lord has been frequently pleas'd, by his Messengers & Servants, to direct people unto that divine Principle of Light and Truth in the inward parts, that so they might be Taught and Instructed by it; yet nevertheless, he has by his Servants given out many Precepts, Rules and Directions, to be observ'd and kept by his Children and People, upon several aecounts, which yet did no way detract from the Spirits motion, nor lessen the esteem thereof in the hearts of those that were truely kept in Unity with it.

Its certain, that the Lord did communicate of his good Spirit unto *Israel* of old, in order to instruct them in the way of Righteousness, and to enable them to perform the things Commanded, as *Nehemiah* witnesseth, *Neh. 9. 20*. And also we read that *Moses*, after he had deliver'd many Precepts and Directions unto the People of *Israel*, he tells them, *Deut. 30. 11*. That the Commandment which he command'd them that day was not hid from them, neither was it afar-off; for says he, *vij. 14*. *The Word is very nigh thee, in thy Mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it.* And although this Word was so nigh them, and that the Lord had given them his Spirit to instruct them, as aforesaid, yet that could not excuse them, for their not keeping and observing divers Rules, Precepts and Directions, which were oftwe dy delivered unto them by *Moses* the Servant of the Lord; nor yet, as Religionous as they were, do we any where find them to make it their plea against *Moses* or the Prophets, that what was so enjoyn'd did not answer the Spirits motion, nor the Word so nigh in the heart; nor did they endeavour thereby to excuse themselves, when they had transgres'd and gone aside from the Commandment of the Lord.

Only we may take notice of the the case of *Miriam*, when *Aaron* and the spake against *Moses* (as d sayd, *1. 11. the Lord only spaken by Moses?*

Moses? Hath he not spoken by us? we read that the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and that Miriam was by Gods appointment, shut out from the Camp seven days, Numb. 12. 1, 2. 9, 14, 15.

And Korab, Dathan, Abiram and others, gathering themselves together against the Servants of the Lord, said unto them, *Yon take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift you up your selves above the Congregation of the Lord?* Numb. 16. 1, 2, 3. But what was the issue of this Work? its observable that the Lord was highly displeased with them, as afterwards was manifest by that terrible Judgment that befell them.

Howbeit, I would have none to suppose that I intend by proposing these things, to give any such preheminence unto any particular person now among us, as was then peculiar unto *Moses*, for that the Lord did make a distinction himself betwixt *Moses* and the rest, Numb. 12. 6, 7, 8. But my intent is simply and plainly to set forth, first, That altho the Servants of the Lord under that Dispensation, delivered several Precepts and Directions unto his Children and People to be observ'd and kept; yet that did no way contradict their other Testimony of their being taught and instructed by the Spirit of God: And secondly, Of how dangerous a consequence it then was to oppose the Servants of the Lord, in the publication of his Will and Mind unto the People.

And further, altho the Apostles, and Servants of Christ, in their respective Testimonies for God and his Truth, did direct People to the Light within, the Word nigh in the heart, the manifestation of the Spirit, and unto that Grace which brings Salvation, that so they might be thereby (through Faith) renew'd unto God, and instructed in the ways of Godliness and Vertue; yet its plain that in divers respects, they gave directions unto the Believers what they should do upon several accounts; as in the case of those at *Antioch*, *Acts* 15. 28, 29. And also when *Paul* and others went through the Cities, they delivered them the Decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the Apostles and Elders which were at *Jerusalem*, *Acts* 16. 4. The same Apostle in several of his Epistles declares his Judgment, and gives Instructions unto the Believers upon several accounts (and yet nevertheless they were to be Instructed by the Spirit.) He writes about the Incestuous Person, *1 Cor. 5.* About Marriage, *Chap. 7.* About Prophesying,

phesying and the order thereof, Chap. 14. He enjoyns Believers not to be unequally yoked together with Unbelievers, 2 Cor. 6. 14. He exhorts the *Thessalonians* to stand fast, and hold the traditions which they have been taught, whether by Word or Epistle, 2 Thess. 2. 15. Again he says, *We command you Brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw your selves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, And not after the tradition, which you received of us,* 2 Thess. 3. 6. He also gives several instructions and things in charge unto *Timothy*, concerning Women, how they shall adorn themselves; concerning Bishops and Deacons, and their Qualifications; concerning Widows, and that a Widow should not be taken into the number under threelcore years old; concerning Younger Widows and Women, what they shall do, and amongst the rest, that they give no occasion to the Adversary to speak reproachfully [Mark that] and also concerning the Elders that rule well, what honour they shall be accounted worthy of; together with several other things, as in those Epistles doth appear.

I might enlarge upon these passages and several others if needfull to prove the matter in hand: But I hope that which is said may suffice such as are not inclinable to contention; that the Primitive Christians did not only practice Order and Goverment in the Church, but that some did in the Wisdom and Counsel of God, Appoint and Ordain certain Things, Condemn and Approve certain Practices as well as Doctrines, by the Spirit of God.

And although the Apostle *Paul* does Enjoyn, Charge, Command, Advise, Exhort and Instruct, as aforesaid; yet it does not therefore follow, that those so Enjoyned, Charged, Commanded, Exhorted, and Instructed, should walk after an Implicit Faith and Blind Obedience, for that they were to wait, to know and feel the Truth in themselves, to oblige them to the observation of those things so commanded; nor did the Apostle hereby any way encroach upon that Christian Liberty which the Believers were call'd into, and were exhorted to stand fast in, for that as they abode in the Light and Spirit of Truth, and under the Government and Exercise thereof in themselves, they would not want an Evidence of the Reasonableness and Necessity of observing those things which he had so enjoynd.

Howbeit we have cause to believe that the Apostle *Paul*, as also others of the Apostles and Servants of Christ, were not without their Exercises with several that might pretend to be Members of the

Church in those Days, which caused him to exhort the *Romans* to mark them which caus'd Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which they had Learn'd, and avoid them, *Rom. 16. 17.* And again when he took his leave of the Elders of the Church at *Ephesus*, he says. *Also of your own selves, shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away Disciples after them, Acts 20. 30.* He also complains of *Hymenaeus, Philetus and Alexander, 2 Tim. 2. 17, 18. Chap. 4. 14.* As concerning *Alexander* he had greatly withstood their words, *vers. 15.* Likewise *John* takes notice of some thing of the same tendency, *1 Joh. 2. 19.* And in his 3d. Epistle he particularly mentions *Diotrephes*, who loved to have the preheminence among them, and that he prated against them with malicious words.

Thus its very probable that when any thing was spoken or written by the Apostles, that did not answer the high and lofty mindes of those people, that were thus exalted above the Cross of Christ, and loved to have the preheminence over that power they should have been subject unto, they fell on to Oppose, Withstand and Gainsay the Apostles and Servants of Christ, in their Testimonies, Exercises and Services for the Lord his Truth and People.

How far these our present Opposers are travelling in the footsteps of those gainsaying people, I shall forbear at present to determine only thus much I may say. (and that upon certain grounds, that I apprehend them to be gone so far in that path) that I desire their speedy return, sincere and hearty Repentance, and unfeigned acknowledgment of their Errors; that so they may yet find mercy with the Lord, if it be the good pleasure of his will.

Now to return to the said Author, he says *That many, or at least some of the Subscribers, unto the said Order do judge it evil; and after some arguments thereupon, he tells those, that they have brought themselves into a Dilema, out of which they cannot extricate themselves, but by retracting their former Errors.*

Reply, If there be any such person as he speaks of, who through their own weakness, or the persuasions of these our Opposers, have been overcome so far, as to give out some expressions to that purpose, such may now see how this Spirit treats them, yea nothing less it seems will serve, than to publish in Print to the World, that they have brought themselves into a Dilema.

But why into a Dilema? if those persons he speaks of (if such there be) upon better a vise and further consideration, do now find that they

they have done nothing in that Case, but what is Right and Justifiable: Yet may we not enquire whether they have given these people Gospel order or not, before they have Printed against them, why does not the Author tell us their names? that so we may know whether his Charge be true or false; if he has Written and Printed against those Subscribers more then he can prove or make out, 'tis probable that fewer arguments may serve to manifest him brought into a *Dilemma*, out of which he cannot extricate himself, but by retracting his own error therein.

He says, *That he hopes they may deny that any Assembly of men, tho they may call themselves a Church, have power to make, ordain or constitute, any Order or Rule, De nova, that can, shall, or ought in the Church to be concluding beyond the Conviction or Concurrence of others.*

Reply, He might very well have stopt his Pen here, a little, and first have consider'd whether any such thing had been offerr'd or not, where does he find any new Order or Rule, ordained by Friends that is not consistant to Truths Testimony, and the evidence thereof in the hearts of such as dwell in Humility and true Self-denial? How can any suppose it to be any noval thing, for those who profess the pure and undefiled Religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, to declare and testify against such practices and things, as bring Infamy, Contempt and Contumely upon their profession? And when as such Testimonies and Declarations are given forth in the wisdom and counsel of God; if thole who reapeat themselves of that Society, think not fit to be concluded beyond conviction (as they say) yet I am satisfied that if there be any such as are truly humble and low in their mindes among them, and have a true regard to the honour of God, the propagation of his blessed Truth, and comfort of his People, will endeavour to be so far concluded as to decline publick oppositions, and will rather be inclined to wait upon God for a discovery of the matter, according to the directions of the Apostle Paul, *Phil. 3. 15. 16.* But on the contrary, where people are turbulent, and even lust to be contentious and at a loose end, rather then they'll have their own private affections, any way disturb'd or molested, they will adventure to sacrifice Truths reputation unto the Scorn and Censure of the World, and run the hazard of bringing a Reproach and Scandal upon the Church of Christ.

Again he says, *If we must believe because others say it; and not because we ourselves know it is true, where is our Christian Freedom and Liberty*

berty which we ought to have, to chuse the Good or refuse the Evil.

Reply, Christian Freedom stands in the Christian Spirit, and the Liberty of Gods people stands there, whoever plead for a Liberty or Freedom out of this, and to do such things as the Spirit of Christ allows not of, then their Freedom is not Good, nor is their Liberty that which is allowed by the Spiritual Law, otherwise call'd the perfect Law of Liberty, *James 1. 25.* Now where the Freedom of people stands only in Christ, and their Liberty only in his Spirit; then such do not believe only because others say it, but because they have an evidence thereof in themselves, and this is the true Christian Freedom and Liberty, which stands in the Spirit of Christ in every particular, and yet holds in an excellent harmony and holy agreement with that which proceeds from the same Spirit in others; so long as people kept to this they are capable of chusing that which is Good, and refusing that which is Evil, but if they go from it and the counsel thereof in themselves, then they have no true discerning, and must either be content to be inform'd by such as abide in the Light, or else they'l put Darkness for Light and Light for Darkness and so go into Confusion.

He says, *That because Church Authority, has heretofore been urged to justify as base ends as any Authority under Heaven, therefore it is just to enquire from whence that Authority springs that would conclude us, not only against Conviction but also against Knowledge.*

Reply, Although the Authority of a false Church has been urged to justify ill ends, yet it does not therefore follow but that the true Church may still exercise that Authority, which is conferr'd upon her in God's power, for there it is that her Authority springs, and in that she has power to act, and also to deal with such as are reckon'd to be within the confines of her Community, not only by way of Exhortation, Caution, Admonition and Reproof, but also in Declaring and Testifying against those (reputed of her) who act contrary to the counsel and directions of that Spirit wherein their Communion stands.

As for concluding against Conviction and Knowledge, I see no such thing attempted by Friends; if people do wilfullv and resolutely shut up themselves, and strive against that which otherwise would convict them and give them a true knowldg; who can help them seeing the fault is in themselves.

We are exhorted by the Apostle *Paul*, that all things be done decently

cently and in good order, 1 Cor. 14.40. This is a general rule, and the particular circumstances of Decency and Order, is left to the discretion of Christians in every age; so that it is necessary that some should determine in the wisdom of God, what is decent and orderly, and what is not so, especially when a Difference or Controversie arises about that very matter, that then which is to be considered, is how, and by whom this must be decided.

First, Then I say, that the power of Decision in this case, only rests in the Power and Spirit of God, as having only the infallible and certain Judgement belonging to it.

Secondly, Since differences may happen to arise betwixt particular persons about the particular circumstances of Decency and Order, *viz.* what is Decent and Orderly, and what is not; it seems to me that in such cases of disagreement, that it is most agreeable to divine injunction, for application to be made unto the Church, or Assembly of Believers, that so they in the wisdom and counsel of God may decide the matter, only I would not be mistaken, for I am not here, nor yet in any other part of this Treatise, placing infallibility upon persons, nor yet am I laying any absolute stress upon such as shall be so assembled, any otherwise then as they are act'd by the infallible Spirit, and govern'd by the divine power. Yet inasmuch as it hath pleased God, not only in times past, but also now in this our Age and Generation, to honour the assemblies of his people with his blessed presence and attend them with his counsel, that so they may act and decide for him according to his holy will in those and the like cases: Therefore, as it hath been, it still is most agreeable to Truth, and the practice of Gods people, in matters of disagreement upon these accounts, to make application to the Church or Assembly of Believers for a decision.

This then being the case of Friends, in giving out their Testimony about second or latter Marriages; tho the Author be pleased to say that it was both against Reason and Truth for them to do what they did, yet he was in a mistake about it, upon his own terms if he would leave them (as he would be left himself) to their Christian Freedom, unless he'll conclude that the Lord has already communicated unto him his whole Will and Counsell; the matter was in difference among some particular persons, some held it indecent and disorderly to marry suddenly after the decease of former Wife or Husband, others would be left to their own freedom to marry again as soon as they pleased; this being propounded to that Meeting, they did according

ding to the Wisdom they had received of God give their Sense and Judgement in the case.

And altho some persons do not apprehend it, or are not satisfied with it, yet many are, and as for those who are not, I know none that intend thereby to impose upon them either beyond or against Conviction, for all their talk. Further, 'tis observable that what comes from God, as directions unto his people, to be by them observed and done, is not Imposition, nor does he Conclude people beyond knowledge, or Condemn any for what they know not, unless they Wilfully, Obstinate and Resolutely Oppose (and Rebel against) that divine Light, which would give them a sense and knowledg of the matter, and indeed in that Case (as hath been observ'd before) for any to plead want of knowledge, and non-conviction, will not excuse them before the Lord.

Thus, Reader, I have gone through the most material things in the said Answer, espec ally where I saw any matter of stress to lye, and I hope, that if thou be ingenious, read impartially, and have an eye to the Lord and the discoveries of his Light in thee, thou mayst see, that tho the Mistakes and Errors in the said Answer are many, yet they are in a great measure detected, and the proceedings of Friends against the persons aforesaid, the Testimony or Paper of Judgment past at York against them, and other things relating thereunto are vindicated and cleared, and that the cause of this Separation was on their own part, in going from the Counsel and Directions of the meek and lowly Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord, into that which has lead them in Variance, Discord, Dis-union and Separation ; so that as they themselves have given the occasion, and laid the ground for these our Dissatisfactions concerning them, I know no reason but that they may be justly chargeable with the evil that succeeds.

A Conclusive EPISTLE.

Dear Friends, Brethren and Sisters, whom the Lord has in measure drawn from under the Bondage of Sin and Corruption, into that Glorious Liberty which stands in his own Spirit, and into that Freedom which alone stands in the Truth, over that which would bring the soul into Bondage : It behoves you (and every of us) to watch unto that Spirit which gathers into this holy Liberty and Freedom, that so we may all stand

Stand fast therein, and may be able to resist the Enemy in all his Wiles and Stratagems, for they are many; and he knowes that 'tis in vain for him to attempt the overcoming of many of those who profess the Truth and Light of the Gospel, with those common Baits and Temptations, wherewith he catches the World and holds them in a servitude unto him. Therefore does he apply himself unto such in another way, which is by transforming himself into the similitude of an Angel of Light, to sit in the Temple of God as the Apostle said) and to oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God. So that when the Lord by his Spirit in and amongst his people, doth give out such Declarations and Testimonies, such wholsome and comfortable, Admonitions, Instructions, Cautions and Directions, as probably may interrupt him in his Proceedings, and prevent him of obtaining his Enterprises: Then doth he subtilly assume unto himself that Liberty and Priviledge, in the hearts of those where he has prevail'd, which is only peculiar to the Spirit of Christ, crying out for Liberty and Freedom (which indeed ought always to be allowed unto a right Spirit, but not unto the wrong) and so under this pretence, that upon Christian Principles, every one ought to be left to the manifestation of the Spirit of Christ, and the guidance thereof in themselves (which is certainly the best Guide any can have, provided they keep but to it) yet under pretence of this Liberty, he would make use thereof for an occasion to the Flesh, and so thereby would advance his own Kingdom, by leading people into things that are Evil, Indecent, Disorderly and of an ill Report.

And because the Enemy apprehends that the Lord by his power, leades his people into the practice of several things, whereby the deceit and subtilty of the Adversary comes to be found out and manifested; therefore he would endeavour to bring us into Disorder and Confusion, by giving out of Formality, forasmuch as he knowes that the very name of Formality is Nauseous among many.

And again because the Lord by his Spirit leads his people to Declare and Testifie against such practices and things as are Indecent, Disorderly, of an ill Report, and that bring contumely and reproach upon the Truth; the Enemy hereby apprehending himself to be interrupted and disturbed in his proceedings, therefore he cryes out of Imposition, knowing that it is a thing hated and disliked by many, and so by these his Wiles and false Pretences, has he endeavour'd to make Breaches in Sion, and to disturb the Peace of Jerusalem.

But blessed be the Lord, according to his promise of old, he has been, and still is with his people that truly fear him, whose Hearts and Minds are kept tender and low before him, and he does not only encourage them in the performance of those Exercises and Services, which he by his Spirit leads them in-

to the practice of, but also discovers the Snares, false Pretences and Temptations of the Wicked One, and enables them to oppose and withstand the same.

Therefore, oh my dear Friends, trust in the Lord, and wait diligently upon him, that so you may receive Wisdom, Strength and Ability from him, to perform those Services and Duties which are owing to him; for as your Eyes are unto him, and the discoveries of his Light and Truth in you, and that wait continually to be subject thereto, you will feel and witness the Lord by his Spirit and Power secretly to work in you, in order to bring you into a divine and holy frame of Heart, Soul and Spirit, and to draw you up into a pure Fellowship and Union with himself in the Life of Righteousness, over the Works and Power of Darkness; so that as you abide in that which is holy and pure, you will be qualified for his Service (but not otherwise) for it is only that which proceeds from him, that can truly order and dispose people rightly to serve him.

Let that therefore abide in you which you have heard from the Beginning, and dwell in a holy fellowship with it; this will Knit and Unite you unto him that is heavenly, and make you Members of his Body, and fit and accomplish you every way, to perform your Office and Service therein, according to the will of God; this will keep every Member humble and low, that it will not assume another place in the Body then is allotted it, nor murmur against those whom the Lord has set in a more eminent place in the Body then it self, but keeping in the Life of the Body, will be content with its own station therein and not Grudge or Repine its fellow Members place.

But where there is a going from the Life and Unity of the Body, and a loosing the Sense thereof then there is a Murmuring, and Repining, and a Quarrelling with every thing that comes not in its own way; nor answers its restless Fancy, so that instead of coming down to Judgment in it self, will stand up and Judge its fellow Members, yea the whole Body; and is not willing to suffer the word of Exhortation, but account the reproofs of instruction, to be Imposition and Oppression; and tho such will not spare to Judge, Revile and Stigmatize others with approbrious terms, yet if they themselves be told of their Faults, admonish and dealt withall according to Truths Order, they become dissatisfied and impatient, and cry out as if their great Charter of Gospel Liberty was broken.

Therefore beware of giving way unto this Murmuring Repining and Contentious Spirit, which labours to make Rents and Divisions in the Church; Touch not, Taste not, nor Handle with it, least you be hurt or defil'd thereby; but keep in a holy subjection unto the Pure, Low, Meek, Humble and Self-denying

denying Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord, and the exercise thereof in your selves, wherein true Peace and Satisfaction is only to be found, this is that by which you are made Branches of the heavenly Vine, and Members of that Body whereof Christ is the head, and by which every Member comes to be fitly Framed, Tempered and Compacted together with the rest and fixed in its own place, that so there may be no Schism in the Body, but that every Member should have the same care one of another in the Love of God, and Warn, Advise, Exhort and Admonish one another in the Spirit of Love and Meekness, that every own may be kept and preserv'd in that which is Pure and Holy, in the Channel of Love and Life, in the Orb and Order of the Celestial power, and be as fixed Stars in the Firmament of God, Shining in the Lustre of Truth and Righteousness, and in the Beauty of Holiness, to the Praise and Glory of his great Name, who has called you out of Darkness into his marvellous Light, to walk therein, as Children of the Day, not in Strife, and Contentions one with another, but in the Unity and Fellowship of that eternal Spirit, by which you are gather'd unto God, and preserved alive before him, so shall the Blessings and Fatherly Visitations of the Almighty God be multiplied amongst you, through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom all fulness dwells, and in whom all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge are hid, who is the Head of the Body the Church, the First-Born from the Dead, who ought in all things to have the Preheminence, who is our Saviour and Redeemer, our Help and Strength, our Comforter and Preserver in the many exercises of our Day and Testimony, into whose hand and keeping, you and I, and every of them that believe in his Name, and walk humbly before him, in a true subjection unto his Spirit and Power, are Committed and Recommended, that so while we Live in this World, we may Live to the Praise and Glory of God, through him, and after our departure hence may be received into that everlasting Habitation prepared for all those that love him in Sincerity.

G. M.

THE END.
